Berkshire Regional Transit Authority

Application for
SECTION 5309
BUS AND BUS FACILITIES LIVABILITY INITIATIVE PROGRAM GRANT

FOR THE

BRTA'S LIVABILITY INITIATIVE

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MA

JULY 2011

SUBMITTED BY:

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

APPLICATION

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) is committed to redeploying its fixed-route bus service to better respond to regional demands and to improve the availability of service for local and regional riders. This can be realized by implementing a regional service delivery system complemented by point deviation through the utilization of a rural ITS support system along with the acquisition of a new fleet of energy efficient vehicles.

Project: BRTA's Livability Initiative

Project Type: This transit initiative consists of continuing the implementation of state-of-the–art ITS system and the replacement of 6 support vehicles for the fixed route service.

Location: Berkshire County, Massachusetts, within the 1st Congressional District, represented by Congressman John W. Olver.

Contact Information

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Applicant Information

BRTA is one of the eight original regional transit authorities founded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1974 and annually services over 517,000 riders with fourteen bus routes, 11 of which are in Pittsfield, four in North Adams and the remaining routes to outlying areas within Berkshire County. Today, there are 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTA) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, eight of which, including BRTA, provide the only transit options in their region. Berkshire County is not served by other transit options such as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and is the sole provider of mass transit for Berkshire County. BRTA also provides assorted paratransit services, human service transportation, and work plan transportation. BRTA operates the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center, which connects local bus and taxi services with intercity rail and bus services and pedestrian access to the central business district.

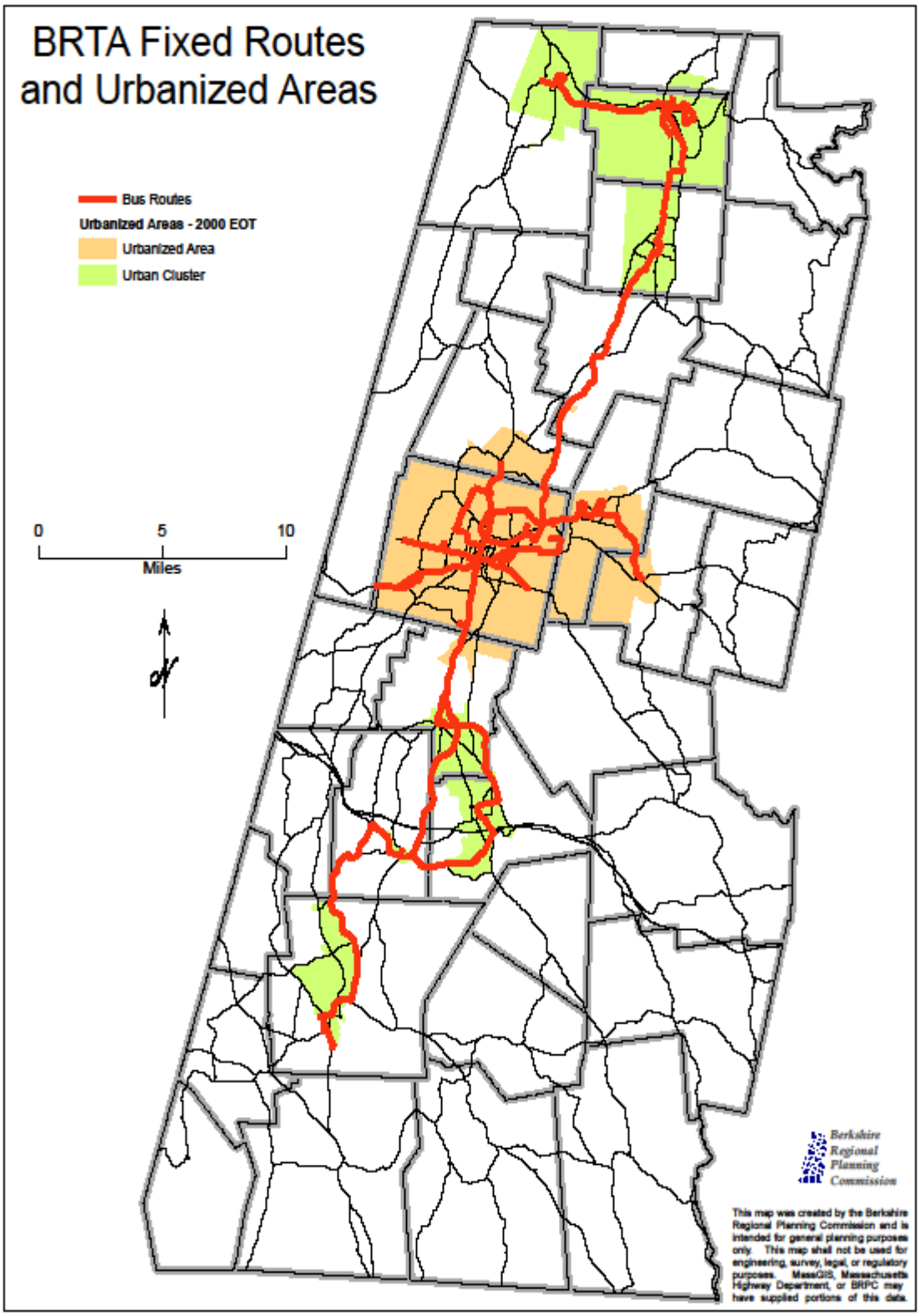
BRTA's Current Service: The BRTA currently services the 22 town and 2 city member communities in Berkshire County by operating a rural fixed route bus system and paratransit services, shown in Figure 1. The daily service area borders Vermont to the north, New York to the west, Connecticut to the south, and is approximately the size of Rhode Island.

BRTA's Current Fleet and Employment Information: The BRTA currently employs 57 people and operates a 24-vehicle fleet with four 35-foot buses, ten 30-foot buses, and ten minivans. The current fleet operates on diesel fuel and has age-related maintenance and operational issues. The 30-foot buses, which generally offer 350,000 miles of use, most have over 400,000 miles currently and are slated for retirement. The 35-foot buses are nearing their half-life of 250,000 miles.

BRTA's Capacity to Implement Project: The BRTA has the technical, legal and financial capacity to implement the project. The BRTA's technical staff will deploy the ITS system integration and manage the capital replacement programs.

Application Format

This application is organized as outlined in the Federal Register Notice, volume 76, number 123, page 37393. Supporting information including letters of support have been posted on the BRTA's website www.berkshirerta.com.


BRTA Fixed Routes
and Urbanized Areas
Bus Routes
Urbanized Areas - 2000 EOT
Urbanized Area
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0
5
10
Miles
N
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, Massachusetts Highway Department, or BRPC may have supplied portions of this data.

Figure 1

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Description

The BRTA's Livability Initiative consists of the continued implementation of state-of-the–art ITS system and the replacement of 6 fixed route support vehicles. The completion of the ITS project will assist attracting and retaining current and future transit ridership. The replacement of the supervisory, service, plow, and dump trucks used in supporting the fixed route service will allow the BRTA to respond more reliably to service calls, accidents, or inclement weather conditions. All projects are contained on the Supplemental List Berkshire Region FY 12-15 Transit Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), due to lack of funding, and can be added to the current TIP project year should funding be awarded. Matching funds required for this initiative will be Toll Credits from MassDOT. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization, and MassDOT have been asked to provide letters of support for the BRTA's Livability Initiative.

Livability Principles

Livability Principles	**BRTA's Initiative Compliance**
Provide more transportation choices	Completed ITS Project will coordinate fixed route deviated service with passenger's needs to work, medical, or social appointments.
Promote equitable, affordable housing	Fixed route transportation is less costly compared to paratransit or taxi service, deviated fixed route will cover additional service areas.
Enhance economic competitiveness	Fixed route service is a safe, reliable, and affordable mode of travel to work, school or home.
Support existing communities	Localized deviated bus service reaches new locations increasing mobility.
Coordinate policies and leverage investment	Completed ITS implementation allows improved bus and paratransit system management.
Value communities and neighborhoods	Localized deviated bus service reaches new locations increasing service area and mobility options.

Projects are listed in order of importance in the event partial funding is awarded to the BRTA. Supporting documents for these projects include the BRTA 5 year Capital plan and the line item budget for the ITS Project completion in Appendix I.

ITS Project

The BRTA used a portion of ARRA funding to implement an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for the fixed route system. RouteMatch was selected as the vendor from the RFP issued in 2010. The RFP response was divided into 3 phases to allow for compartmentalization of the installation as additional funding was received. Phase I is nearing completion and the funding sought in this application would complete the fixed route and paratransit modules of this project and incorporate the Human Service Transportation (HST) brokerage module. Together these modules would provide a significantly enhanced service delivery solution, create feeder service and deviated route service delivery alternatives, increase individual rider options, institute a real time passenger information platform, and provide a comprehensive passenger data base as well as operational data required for FTA, NTD, and BRTA reporting.

The total additional funds required to complete Phase II and Phase III, less residual funding from Phase I is $2,962,301. The total funding required to integrate the ADA mobile data terminals with the fixed route operation is $258,570. The total funding required to integrate the HST operation and technology with the fixed route and ADA phases is $321,250.
The total cost to complete this ITS project is $3,542,121 with a federal portion of $2,833,697 and a state match of $708,424.

Because RouteMatch currently is under contract with the BRTA for the ITS system, these additional segments can be awarded and contracted immediately after award notification of funding is received.

Vehicle Replacement

The BRTA will replace 6 fixed route support vehicles including 3 supervisory units, one 1999 vintage with 119,068 miles in poor condition and two 2006 vintage with 35,310 and 43,895 miles in good condition; a 2007 plow truck with 23,105 miles in good condition; a 2002 dump truck with 32,209 miles in poor condition; and a 1997 road call service truck with 32,733 miles in poor condition. Typical replacement thresholds for these vehicle types are 5 years or 150,000 miles. The current vehicle average age is 8 years old with an average of 47,700 miles.

The 3 Supervisory vehicles would be replaced with hybrid SUV type vehicles with a unit cost of $35,000. The plow truck replacement cost is $35,000 and the dump truck replacement cost is $42,000, with the road call service truck replacement cost of $100,000.

The total replacement cost for these 6 vehicles is $282,000. The Federal portion is $225,600 and $56,400 for the state share of these minibuses.

The BRTA has begun researching what purchasing options are available to fast track the purchase of these vehicles, should funding be awarded.

Evaluation Criteria

The BRTA's ITS Project represents a commitment to complete a worthwhile project, started with ARRA funding, that when fully implemented will provide transit riders of Berkshire County, MA some of the same amenities enjoyed throughout the nation, reduce operational costs by increasing paratransit ride sharing opportunities, and increase mobility options through deviated fixed route service. This project did receive a congressional earmark that was stalled and never fully awarded with the election change in 2010, causing the project to be scaled back until replacement funding was secured. This application is a one-time funding request to complete the project that if unsuccessful, would take many fiscal years to complete. The combined fixed route, paratransit and Human Service Transportation modules will provide the much needed tools to coordinate passenger trips efficiently, seamlessly and cost effectively while attracting and retaining current and future transit ridership.

The replacement of the supervisory, service, plow, and dump trucks used in supporting the fixed route service will allow the BRTA to respond more reliably to service calls, accidents, or inclement weather assistance. The BRTA has been level funded through State Contractual Assistance over the past few years, causing capital projects to be placed on hold as all available funding has been used for operational expenses. The BRTA did use ARRA funding to perform almost $175,000 in Capitalized Maintenance expenses last year.

Conclusion

Project	Federal	State Match
ITS Project	$2,833,697	$708,424
Vehicle Replacement	$ 225,600	$ 56,400
Project Total	$3,059,297	$764,824

The projects listed above demonstrate the requirement to remain current with the fleet replacement projects and embrace new technologies to improve service to our customers, and maintain the assets entrusted to our stewardship.

APPENDIX I

BRTA Capital Plan
RouteMatch ITS completion Schedule